Sponsorship.

A Manual for

GODFATHERS AND GODMOTHERS.

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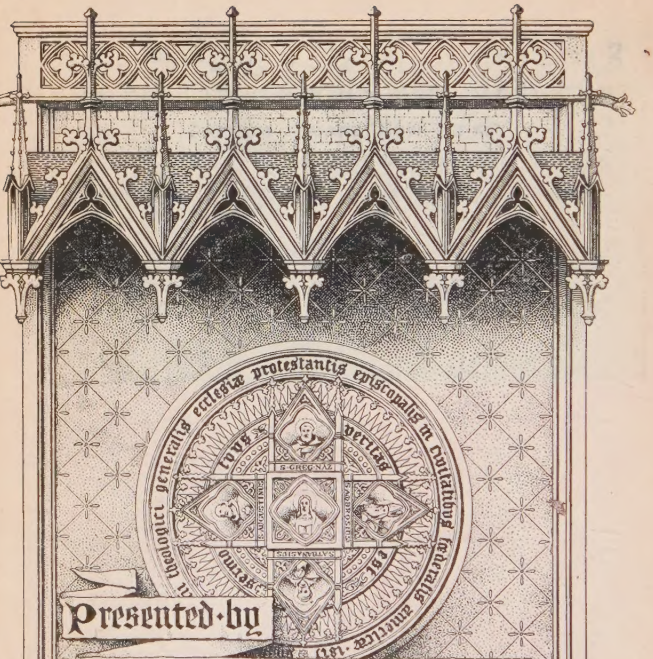

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SPONSORSHIP,

OR

THE DIVINE COVENANT AND THE SPONSOR'S OBLIGATION THEREIN.

A Manual

OF COUNSEL AND INSTRUCTION FOR GODFATHERS AND GODMOTHERS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A REGISTER

FOR INSERTING THE NAMES AND OTHER MEMORANDA OF GODCHILDREN.

BY THE

REV. C. S. PERCIVAL, A. M.

CLEVELAND, O.:
W. W. WILLIAMS.
1882.

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INTRODUCTION.

It is now some fifteen years since I first conceived the idea of preparing a manual of instruction for the use of sponsors, in connection with a register for inserting the names and other memoranda of godchildren. On explaining my plan to several friends prominent in the Church (both bishops and presbyters) I was assured that such a book would be something quite as novel in Church literature as it might be made useful in Christian nurture; and I was warmly encouraged to put my plan into execution. This I concluded to do; and, having resolved to try the experiment of publishing by subscription, I issued a prospectus and distributed it among the clergy, asking for pledges to be sent to a Church book-seller

in Chicago, who had consented to act as my agent. A goodly number of favorable responses were received; but before the work was ready for the press, the list was destroyed in the great fire, and the publication was temporarily given up. The manuscript, however, was completed soon after; and as other cares, labors, and interests supervened, it has lain neglected in its pigeon-hole till the present time. But now, the offer of a responsible publisher having called it from its hiding-place, it is placed in his hands, after a third careful revision, with the promise of being speedily put in type.

A manual of any art or profession should afford an answer to all the principal questions which an inexperienced person desiring to learn it, would be likely to ask concerning it. And a register should not only contain suitable blanks for inserting all important memoranda of the subjects recorded, but it should also be of as durable a form as possible. Both these principles have been kept in view in the preparation of this book. In the first part the profession

of sponsorship is explained, both in its theoretical and practical bearings, as fully as the necessary limits of a volume, designed to be brought within the easy reach of all classes of sponsors, would permit. And in the second, ample provision is made for entering, under appropriate heads, such a record of the principal events in the religious history of godchildren, as all faithful sponsors must naturally wish to preserve for future reference.

The design of sponsorship is to serve as a means, or at least as an aid, to bring children into covenant with God, and so to train them up in that blessed relation, that they will continue in the same unto their life's end. A complete manual of sponsorship, therefore, must embrace a consideration of the nature and intent of the divine covenant, of baptism, its seal under the new dispensation; and of confirmation, the complement of baptism. Many of my observations upon these profound subjects will doubtless seem to my clerical brethren trite and common-place; but they will of course bear in mind that I am not writing for

those who have made such themes a matter of life-long study. My book is not designed to afford instruction for the clergy, but to bring them practical aid in the performance of their sacred duties, by impressing upon the minds of the laity a deeper sense of the responsibility which rests upon them, as members of the Church of Christ. And I shall consider the end of my labor in its preparation fully accomplished, if (to any considerable extent) it shall be found worthy of being recommended by the parochial ministry, to the careful and devout use of the people under their charge.

I announced, in the prospectus of my manual, that controverted points of doctrine would not be discussed in it. This statement of course had reference to doctrinal questions in regard to which there is more or less controversy within our own communion: since it would be obviously impossible to make any statement of the views held by all classes of Episcopalians, concerning baptism and the relation of baptized children to the Church, without coming into direct collision with the views of several

other religious bodies. These bodies constitute one of the principal sources from which accessions to our communion are drawn. And if, in giving instruction to sponsors in the theory and practice of the sacred profession of sponsorship, I shall, at the same time, have furnished them with arguments with which to convince their non-Episcopal neighbors of the scriptural character of our beloved Church, I shall have added to my book an incidental value which no true Churchman will underestimate.

So far as our own church is concerned, I trust it will be found that I have kept strictly within the limits of my pledge; for although some of my statements may not be wholly satisfactory to a man of extreme views in either direction, yet I do not apprehend that any of them will be seriously faulted by those who accept, in whatever legitimate sense, the plain teachings of the Prayer Book.

Sponsors who have been for many years prominent members of the congregations to which they severally belong, may not find

spaces enough in the register for inserting the memoranda of all their godchildren. But those who have faithfully kept such a record for a few years, and at last found it too limited for their needs, will hardly be able to content themselves without procuring another, or else constructing one for themselves upon the same general plan.

No one can appreciate more fully than myself the many deficiencies of this little book; but, such as it is, I offer it to the Church with the devout prayer that, by the blessing of God, it may accomplish at least some of the good which I ardently desire.

SPONSORSHIP.

SPONSORSHIP.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINE COVENANT.

There is no idea more sublime in itself, or more ennobling to human nature, than that which represents the Deity as entering into covenant relations with men. That the infinite Creator should condescend to treat with His finite creatures, as a man treats with his fellow—that the Governor of the universe should enter into alliance with His rebellious subjects, binding Himself to confer upon them, both in time and in eternity, the highest conceivable blessings, upon conditions at once the most reasonable and the most honorable—surely no other thought, within the range of human comprehension,

can be more exalted, or more exalting, than this.

It is true that, to the unregenerate mind, this idea is not the most attractive; but to the mind of the true believer it is full of comfort and delight. To one whose thoughts are engrossed by the cares and the objects of sense, it may seem vague and unreal; and yet it is in strict accordance with the dictates of natural, as well as of revealed, religion.

If, as the religion of nature clearly teaches, there is an intelligent Creator and Governor of the universe, whose authority men ought to obey, though they have the ability to disobey it; who makes known His existence and power by many irrefragable proofs, and who, while desiring the happiness of all, will certainly punish the disobedient and reward the obedient; and if, as human experience declares, the soul, conscious of sin, instinctively yearns for some reliable assurance (which none but God can give) that His love and favor, lost by transgression, may be regained by repentance—then must it be reasonable to

suppose that God, by offering to the fallen and penitent terms of pardon and reconciliation, should make a covenant with them.

And what the voice of nature thus declares to be probable, the voice of inspiration pronounces certain. That God enters into formal covenant with men, is the great germinal fact of revelation. Even the facts of the incarnation and of the atonement are the natural outgrowth of this, as the blossom is developed from the bud, or the fruit from the blossom. Blot out from the Bible all allusions, direct and indirect, to this momentous truth, and all the rest would be utterly without value, if not without meaning. If God had not revealed Himself as a "covenant-keeping God," all else that He has revealed would have been insufficient to afford mortal and sinful men any ground of hope.

Nor are we to understand that the Divine covenant refers to the human race simply as a whole; that after the apostasy of Adam, God saw fit to reveal to the race His determination to provide for them a Saviour, and His willingness to forgive and receive

into favor all those who would accept His salvation in faith, penitence and obedience, and that His simple promise to do this constitutes all there is in His covenant with men. Clearly as a revelation, proceeding no further than this, would have exhibited the mercy of God, it would not have satisfied the natural longing of any penitent soul, nor served as a sufficient incentive to awaken the impenitent from the lethargy in which sin had bound them. No conscious sinner that had been led to desire and seek for the mercy of God, could ever rest content without some tangible assurance that God had made over to him that mercy, by a direct personal guaranty. He would as much expect to receive from God a formal assurance of pardon, as to make to Him a formal acknowledgment of repentance and pledge of obedience. Such an assurance a general revelation of God's mercy toward men could not of itself supply. This general revelation God did make to the fallen pair in Eden, and if that had been sufficient for the restoration of men, doubtless no other would ever have been

made. Nor would a general promise of the divine mercy have constituted a proper covenant at all. In the nature of things a literal covenant must always bind two parties, the one offering and the other accepting its terms, or else both parties mutually stipulating and agreeing. If one person make an unconditional promise to another, no matter by what solemn obligation the former may bind himself, his promise cannot be considered a literal covenant, since the two parties do not, as the word implies, come together in mutual stipulation and agreement.

Hence God's promise to Noah (Genesis IX: 11) that the waters should "no more become a flood to destroy all flesh," is called a "covenant" rather in a metaphorical than in the literal sense of that word. Since the promise was without conditions, and man had nothing whatever to do, either in causing it to be made or in securing its fulfillment, there was not that coming together of two parties, which constitutes a literal covenant.

But when God said to Abraham, (Genesis

xvii : 2) "I will make my covenant between me and thee," although the same word is employed, it is obvious, from the context, that it is used in a very different sense. For in the verse immediately preceding there is found this stipulation: "Walk before me and be thou perfect." And a little further on it is required, as a "token of the covenant," that "every man-child among you shall be circumcised." And this requirement was coupled with the following condition: "The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people" —that is, as Bishop Patrick interprets it, "he shall not be accounted one of God's people"—for (Jehovah proceeds to say) "he hath broken my covenant;" which doubtless means the same as if God had said, "he hath refused to ratify my covenant."

Here, then, we have certain conditions on the part of the Almighty, and their voluntary acceptance on the part of man; neither of which marks characterized the Noachian "covenant," so-called. But the difference in the form of these two promises is not

greater than the difference in the subjects to which they relate. The promise made to Noah referred to certain temporal blessings, which were to descend upon the whole race—good and bad together; that promise therefore was unconditional, since man had nothing to do with its fulfillment. But the promise made to Abraham, while it embraced the temporal advantages which God designed to bestow upon the Hebrew nation, related more especially to the spiritual blessings which the faithful only were to enjoy "with faithful Abraham." From their very nature these blessings could not be unconditionally bestowed. Hence the very proposal to bestow them involved the idea of a veritable covenant between God and man.

And as this covenant was made and ratified at the first between God and a single individual of our race, so has it been ever since and so it is at the present hour. Not more certain is it that God entered into covenant relations with Abraham as an individual, than that he did the same with you and me, my Christian brother, when

the vows and promises of our holy religion were voluntarily assumed by ourselves, or laid upon us by the legitimate authority of parents and sponsors in the Church of Christ. And this covenant is as real and its obligations are as binding, as if God had come to each of us in person, as He did to Abraham, and with an audible voice, had offered us certain favors upon specified conditions, which we voluntarily accepted and solemnly bound ourselves to perform. God actually did this through the ministry of the Church, which is His representative in the world, and the covenant therein transmitted from Abraham to us, is just as binding upon us as it was upon him.

If these things are so (which surely no Christian will deny) "what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!"

CHAPTER II.

THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT.—CIRCUMCISION.—BAPTISM.

I stated in the preceding chapter, that the first requisite to the existence of a real covenant, is that it shall bind two parties coming together in mutual and voluntary agreement. There is one other requisite, of equal necessity and universality, viz: a sign or seal which both parties to the covenant shall recognize as a symbol of its binding force. Since the world began there was never a covenant made—nor, in fact, a mutual compact or agreement of any sort—between two parties, without the employment of such a symbol. Every written covenant contains a seal, without which the instrument is invalid—or else the signature of the parties becomes (as the word implies) a sign of their good faith. And if a covenant, in certain cases, can be made binding without formal seal or writ-

ten signatures, it certainly never can be without some outward sign of the inward intention of the parties. When two friends pledge to each other their mutual fidelity, the joining of hands is a visible symbol of that spiritual union which they therein bind themselves to maintain; and if their union be that which is cemented by conjugal love, the ring of gold, "given and received," is declared to be "a token and pledge of the covenant betwixt them made,"—the sign of its purity and the seal of its perpetuity. These may be taken as specimens of the various ways in which all human compacts, without exception, are "signed and sealed."

Doubtless there exists, in the nature of man, some deep necessity for this universal use of seals in the ratification of covenants. Man being composed of soul and body—spirit and matter—existing together in a union indissoluble except by death, every action of his must partake of his twofold nature. There can be no voluntary physical movement without the intervention of the spirit; nor can the spirit manifest any

of its motions but by the intervention of the body. The making of covenants, the pledging of mutual fidelity between man and man, are mental acts which, like all other motions of the spirit, require some physical manifestation, not only to make them known, but also to give them a permanent memorial. For this purpose the language of symbols—of signs and seals—is joined to that of speech and writing (which are themselves symbolical,) not only for its greater permanence, but also for its impressiveness and universal significance.

It may be, therefore, that when God would make a covenant with man, there existed in the nature of things a necessity that He should appoint a seal in which man could recognize the plighted faith of the Almighty. But even if the use of seals were an arbitrary custom, God would certainly adopt, in such a case, the language which man had found most conducive to his own convenience. We find, in fact, that not only the actual covenants which God made with men, but also the promises of blessings, whether general or particular,

which by revelation He made known to them, He condescended to certify by the appointment of some visible signs as tokens of His fidelity.

His first promise of a Saviour was given to the race, through Adam and Eve, immediately after the fall. And as animal sacrifices were appointed at the same time (doubtless by divine authority, although there is no record of the fact) it seems but reasonable to suppose that they were designed not only as a type of the atonement, but also as a seal of the divine promise. When, in the "Noachian covenant," God promised never again to destroy the world by a flood, He appointed the rainbow as a "token of the covenant," and a sign of His compassion toward men. The blood of the paschal lamb, sprinkled upon the lintel and the two side-posts of the door, in every Hebrew dwelling, on the night of the departure from Egypt, was a sign of God's promise to His people that the destroying angel should pass over them, and also of their faith in the divine word.

To these examples many others might

be added (such as the sun standing still upon Gibeon, the shadow going ten degrees backward on the dial of Ahaz, and the fleece miraculously bedewed on the floor of Gideon) all showing how God, when he made revelation of any promised blessing to men, condescended to assure them of the same, by giving them some token which they would recognize as the seal of His promise. How much more would he do this when he purposed to take men into alliance with Himself, by making a covenant with them? There must, however, naturally be this difference between a mere pledge for the fulfillment of a promise, and the seal of a veritable covenant: The latter is a pledge of mutual fidelity; while the former is a token only of his who made the promise.

As the Abrahamic covenant was an actual coming together of God and man in mutual stipulation or agreement, so circumcision, the seal of that covenant, was a sign of the mutual fidelity of the parties making the compact. That it was a sign of God's faithfulness to Abraham and his descend-

ants is too obvious to admit of a doubt. In proposing to ratify this covenant, God Himself declared (Genesis XVII : 7): "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." And in proposing the seal of the covenant, He said: "Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." That God intended this as a visible pledge of his fidelity to Abraham, and that the latter received it as such, must be evident to all.

That it was also intended and received as a token of Abraham's fidelity to God, is equally obvious. The execution of all compacts proceeds upon the supposition of the mutual good faith of the parties. If Abraham had not intended to bind himself and his posterity to the imposed condition of walking uprightly before God, he would not have dared to insult Jehovah by pretending to ratify the covenant—nor would the All-seeing One, acting miraculously

without the intervention of any appointed minister, have permitted him to perform so hypocritical and sacrilegious an act. It is declared of him (Genesis XV: 6,) that, long before his circumcision, "he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." And St. Paul, commenting upon this passage, says (Romans IV: 11,) that "he received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." And as the idea of faithfulness can never be separated from that of religious faith, we are warranted in saying that circumcision was as much a token of Abraham's fidelity to God, as of God's to Abraham.

In ancient times the custom was well-nigh universal of sealing oaths and covenants in blood, taken sometimes from the body of a slain animal, and sometimes from that of the person making the vow. This custom may have had its origin in that of animal sacrifices which, as I have already hinted, was doubtless designed as the seal of God's first promise to fallen men. In those early times, also, before God's revela-

tion to men was complete, while His purposes for their redemption were, so to speak, in process of crystallization, and while His communications with men were all of a miraculous nature, His servants would naturally crave some more sensible and permanent marks of His intervention than would be looked for after the order of revelation was finished, and the Divine Kingdom on earth had been fully established.

These facts, together with the striking symbolism hinted at in the collect for the Festival of the Circumcision of Christ, sufficiently explain the appointment of circumcision—a religious rite which, to the eyes of the intelligent believer, presents much beauty, propriety, and significance that are, of course, hidden from wilful ignorance and scoffing infidelity.

All that circumcision was under the Jewish dispensation, baptism is (and more) under the Christian dispensation. The old covenant, made with Abraham and his desendants, gave place to the new covenant made with Christ and His Church; and as

circumcision was the seal of the former, baptism is of the latter. The old covenant, however, did not expire; but simply took on a new form of life under the new dispensation. Not more certain is it that the same life that puts forth its vigor in the oak existed beforehand in the acorn, than that the covenant which now binds us to God in Christ, is vitally the same as that which bound the Hebrew to Jehovah.

That there was to be a renewal of the covenant, under another form and dispensation, is directly asserted by the prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Malachi; and that their prophecies, in this relation, refer to the coming of Christ, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, clearly shows. But the same Apostle shows, quite as clearly, that "the righteousness which is of faith" was just as distinctly pledged to God by those who bound themselves to His service under the old covenant, as under the new.* While, therefore, the form of the covenant was changed, its spirit remained the same.

*See Note A.

That a change in the seal of the covenant should take place along with its change of form, is no more than what, upon general principles, we might reasonably expect. But there were two especial reasons for the discontinuance of circumcision as soon as the Church of Christ was fully established.

In the first place, animal sacrifices, the seal of God's promise of a Saviour, were to be done away as soon as He, their great Antitype, had come and laid down His life for the sins of the world. It was unfitting, therefore, that the divine covenant should continue to be sealed in blood, after the whole sacrificial system (of which that bloody seal was the natural outgrowth) had been abolished.

In the second place, the covenant was no longer to be confined to a single nation. The promise that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth should be blessed, was to be fulfilled in Christ. The distinction between Jew and Gentile was to be annulled, and all were to be one in Him. Under the old covenant none could be for-

mally admitted into the Church without becoming identified with the Jewish nation. But when "the Desire of all nations" had come, every nation of the earth, without losing its individual identity, was to be admitted into membership with the Church Catholic which he came to establish. It was not, therefore, in the nature of things that the exclusive mark of circumcision should be retained under a system so comprehensive as that.

We accordingly find that, although baptism was, by the command of Christ, adopted as of universal obligation before the practice of circumcision went into complete disuse, yet the latter was gradually given up as Jewish prejudice subsided, and the former alone occupied its place. It is true there is no direct statement of Christ or of His Apostles (unless that remarkable passage in Colossians II: 11-12, may be so regarded) declaring that baptism was to take the place of circumcision as the seal of the covenant; but that the first Christians considered it as actually taking that place, is obvious from many declarations of the

earliest Christian writers, after the Apostles, and from the fact that one of the earliest controversies in the Church arose from the doubts entertained by some, whether children could properly be baptized before the eighth day—the day upon which infants were circumcised among the Jews. This controversy was settled by a council held at Carthage, A. D. 250—the decision being that infants should be baptized at the earliest day convenient after their birth; but the fact that any were of the opinion that their baptism should be deferred to the eighth day, is a presumptive proof that, in the estimation of all, baptism took the place of circumcision. Mr. Wall, in his History of Infant Baptism, quotes from several of the early fathers, showing that such was the general belief.

That baptism was from the first regarded as the seal of the new covenant, is clearly shown by the fact that the name, seal, was one of the earliest and commonest applied by the Church to that sacred ordinance. But if this had not been the case, yet, as there was the same necessity for a seal to

the new covenant as to the old, and as baptism fulfilled all the conditions of a seal—which nothing else could be said to do—we should be fully justified in calling that sacrament (as nearly all Christians do) "the seal of the covenant."

Of the inherent fitness of baptism to occupy the place it does under the Christian dispensation, I have space only for a word. That, however, will suffice for so plain a topic.

Water, which cleanses all things, is the natural symbol of purity. In the legal purifications which were practiced under the Jewish dispensation, it had been employed as such a symbol, from the earliest times. The baptism of proselytes and their children was a rite which had long been known among the Jews, and had paved the way for the baptism of John, as that did for the baptism of Christ. When, therefore, according to the appointment of God, the blood of Christ "which cleanses from all sin," had been shed upon the cross, and the blood of sacrifices in His Church had ceased to flow—when the ritual puri-

fications prescribed by the law of Moses had been discontinued, and circumcision as the seal of the covenant had been set aside —what other type so appropriate could the Church have retained to mark the initiation of her members, as that of baptism? When in the new covenant her children bound themselves and their offspring to a life of purity and holiness, what more fitting rite could have been adopted for the seal of the covenant, than that the subjects of that holy vow should be dipped .or washed in pure water?

In that sacred ordinance we who have been baptized, whether in infancy or adult years, took upon ourselves the covenant of Christ. Let us never forget the high and solemn significance of the act, nor for one moment waver in the allegiance which we then vowed to the great Captain of our salvation—Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer.

CHAPTER III.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

In regard to the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism there are, so far as I am aware, but two theories. The first is this: That the application of water in the name of the Holy Trinity, in any manner —whether by pouring or sprinkling it upon the subject, or by immersing the subject therein—constitutes valid baptism. The second is this: that there can be no proper baptism except by immersing (or submerging) the subject completely in water. The former theory is held by a vast majority, even of Protestant Christians; the latter only by the various religious bodies that take the name of Baptists—although Immersionists would be a much more descriptive appellation; and, according to their theory, one equally honorable.

The theory that valid baptism can be

administered only by immersion, is based mainly upon two assumptions—first, that no other mode was practiced by the Apostles; and second, that the word baptize necessarily means to immerse. The former of these assumptions can never be proved, and the latter can easily be disproved.

In no instance of baptism by the Apostles is the mode even hinted at. That John the Baptist and Philip the Deacon baptized by immersion, is assumed by the Baptists, because it is said in the sacred record, that the persons baptized by them went down into the water. But the same preposition would have been used in Greek, if it had been true that they went only to the water. And even if it be admitted that they went into the water, it by no means necessarily follows that they were completely submerged therein.

On the other hand, in several instances of baptism by the Apostles, it is highly improbable that the subjects were immersed. When the jailor at Philippi, having been converted at midnight by the miracle of his

prisoners' release, and the instruction of Paul and Silas, (Acts xvi : 33) "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his, straightway," it certainly seems improbable that there should have been conveniences at hand for immersing them all, on so sudden an emergency. And when, on the Day of Pentecost, three thousand were baptized by the eleven, in the course of a few hours, it is perhaps still more improbable that the rite was administered by immersion.

But whatever may be said about the possibilities, in these and other cases, it certainly can never be proved that the mode of baptism employed was immersion, unless it can be shown that the word baptize necessarily means to immerse. And this, as I have said, can easily be disproved.

That the word baptize, as used in the classics, does not necessarily, or even primarily, mean to immerse completely in a fluid, the merest tyro in Greek very well knows. When he reads, in the Greek Mythology, that Hercules dipped (baptized)

his arrows in the blood of the Lernæan Hydra—and when, in the second Book of Xenophon's Anabasis, he reads that the soldiers of Cyrus, on a certain occasion, ratified an oath by dipping (baptizing) their spears in blood contained in the hollow of a shield—he knows very well that the weapons could not have been completely immersed in the liquid. Only the points were wet, and yet the weapons are said to have been baptized—and the word is evidently used in its original sense.

It is true that, in these cases, the objects were moved toward the liquid, and not the liquid toward the objects. But it would be foolish to assert that, in either case, the dipping was essential to the validity of the act. The soldiers must have understood that the only essential thing in the ceremony, was the wetting of the points—the effective parts—of the weapons in the blood. If, therefore, in the spirit of true and honest loyalty to their commander they had thought it more convenient to apply the blood to their spear points in some other way than by dipping them in it,

how absurd would it have been to accuse them of refusing to ratify their oaths! But not a whit more absurd than to charge honest and intelligent Christians, whose heads have been wet with baptismal water in the name of the Holy Trinity, with refusing to ratify their covenant with their Maker, or with violating one of the essential commands of the "Captain of their Salvation," because their heads, and even their whole bodies, have not been dipped in that symbolic element!

Nor is it in the classics alone, but also in the New Testament itself, that we find unanswerable proof that the word baptism may mean something very different from immersion. In the seventh chapter of St. Mark we are informed that, among other ceremonial traditions to which the Jews held, was that of the frequent "washing of tables." The word rendered tables means literally the couches on which they were accustomed to recline at table; and the word rendered washing is, in the original, baptism. To assert that the Jews had the custom of immersing their couches, would

be preposterous. Evidently, as Bishop Randall has shown, these washings refer to the ceremonial purifications which were made after some supposed legal defilements. And we know that such purifications were ordinarily performed by sprinkling. This, therefore, is undoubtedly the meaning of the word baptize, in the passage under consideration. How absurd, then, to charge it upon Christians who consider sprinkling or pouring as valid baptism, that they have departed from the original sense of Scripture!

But although it cannot be proved from the Scripture narrative, that immersion was the original mode of baptizing—and although the original word is so far from necessitating that mode, that in one of its uses it seems to favor sprinkling (which is certainly more in accordance with the analogy of the Mosaic purifications), still we freely admit the fact, that immersion was the usual practice in the times immediately succeeding that of the Apostles. If it be claimed that this fact affords strong reason for believing that immersion was practiced

by the Apostles, we grant it. But there is another fact quite as susceptible of proof as this—viz: that in the same age of the Church, baptism was administered by sprinkling or pouring, in certain exceptional cases, without any question of its validity.

Bingham, who admits, in his "Christian Antiquities," that "no deviation [from the practice of immersion] was made in ordinary cases," states that "in sickness and extreme danger of life," and also "in cases where sufficient water could not be procured, as when a martyr in prison was to be baptized, or to baptize others—baptism by aspersion or sprinkling was then allowed." And he cites the writings of Cyril, in the fourth century, to prove "that its lawfulness or validity was never disputed."

Now if the other fact is a strong proof that the Apostles baptized by immersion, this is a proof equally strong that they also baptized by sprinkling,—or, at least, that they did not hold the manner essential. For it is inconceivable that those whom the Apostles had taught would have ventured to change the mode, unless they knew that

their inspired teachers regarded it as non-essential. This is all we claim. And the Church having sanctioned both modes, we prefer that which is never dangerous nor burdensome, which can never violate propriety or decency, and which is equally suited to all conceivable times, places, and circumstances.

We see, from these considerations, how wise our translators were in adopting the word baptize, instead of translating it, whenever it refers to the sacrament of baptism. For no specific term in English could be found which would be true to all the meanings of the original word; and to translate it by any one of them would be to make the essence of a sacrament consist in the mode of its administration.

But even if it were true, as those who hold exclusively to immersion assert, that the primary and literal meaning of the word baptise is to immerse, and that the ordinance of baptism was originally administered in that mode; they would still convict themselves of a grave inconsistency, by regarding it as an ecclesiastical fault to ignore

in theory the original meaning of the name, and neglect in practice the original mode; for in their administration of the other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, they have done precisely the same thing.

We know that when the Lord's Supper was originally instituted, it was administered by Christ to His disciples reclining at table upon couches. We know that the bread used was unleavened, and that it was eaten by males only, in immediate connection with a repast consisting of a roasted lamb and bitter herbs. We know also that the word supper, in its original meaning, implies a full meal taken at evening. Now what trace of this original institution would a literalist detect in the ordinary mode of receiving the communion among the Baptists? A morsel of common bread, and a sip of wine, taken in the forenoon—is that a "supper," like the Hebrew passover? A company of men and women together, receiving these elements without the Paschal accompaniments, and in a sitting posture—is this in accordance with the original mode? But surely the sacrament of the Lord's

Supper is quite as sacred as that of baptism; and the obligation to adhere to the original form of administration is as binding in the one case as in the other. If, therefore, the Baptists are correct in their views as to the original institution of baptism, other Christians have just as much right to change that institution for the sake of convenience, as they have to do the same thing in perpetuating their memorial of the Lord's Supper.

If it be said, in allusion to Romans VI: 4, that the figure of being buried and raised again with Christ in baptism must be preserved, I reply, that when a person has knelt at the chancel-rail, received the water of the font sprinkled or poured upon him, and again risen to his feet, there has been exhibited a better representation of burial and resurrection, than when he has been sunk in the water and again elevated from it. For when a man is buried in the ground, the earth does not recede of its own accord and then close over him again like a fluid; but the body is first lowered into the grave, then the earth is cast upon it.

These obvious suggestions ought to prevent any Churchman from being disturbed by the arguments of those who have succeeded in building up a numerous sect upon a slighter foundation than ever before supported so extensive and questionable a superstructure.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DESIGN AND EFFECT OF BAPTISM.

As shown in Chapter II, the primary and most obvious design of baptism is to take the place of circumcision as the seal of the covenant. A very correct idea, therefore, as far as it goes, of the effect of baptism, may be found by considering the uses of a seal attached to any agreement or compact between man and man. The seal of any instrument is a pledge and representative of all the benefits which the instrument is designed to convey. Is it a deed of property? The seal represents the transfer of the lands, houses, or other goods thereby conveyed to their new proprietor. Is it a deed of amnesty made by a sovereign to a political offender, on his taking the oath of allegiance? The seal represents the pardon, protection, and restoration to civil rights,

extended by the government to its erring but repentant subject.

And so baptism, the seal of the Divine covenant, represents to men all the blessings promised therein. It represents, first, the pardon or remission of sins—whether actually committed, as in the case of adults, or inherited in the sinful nature of Adam, as in the case of infants. When at the preaching of St. Peter, on the first Whitsunday the multitude "were pricked in their heart and said, men and brethren what shall we do?" The Apostle replied, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts II : 38.)

Here the sense naturally connects the phrase, "for the remission of sins," with "be baptized," since we are not required to repent in the name of Jesus Christ. If the remission of sins were made dependent mainly upon repentance, as some have claimed, this verse would have been made to read: Repent, every one of you, for the remission of sins, and be baptized in

the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. But, as the passage stands, it is entirely harmonious with another (Acts XXII: 16), where we are informed that, after Saul of Tarsus had believed, repented and prayed for forgiveness, Ananias said to him, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"—that is, making a profession of faith in Christ.

These, and other passages of similar import, are condensed into the tenth article of the Nicene creed: "I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins." Whatever, therefore, may be said about the possibility of ultimate pardon without baptism, in any particular case, it is certain that, in this present life, there can be no formal pledge of pardon without the reception of that divinely appointed ordinance. And since that great benefit is always represented as accompanying the right reception of the sacrament, we are warranted in saying that covenanted pardon is one of the effects or results of baptism.

Another effect of baptism is that "change

of nature"—or that "transition from a state of nature to a state of grace"—or that "change in the relation of the baptized to Christ and His kingdom" (for all these phrases have been used by different writers to describe it)—which, in the baptismal office, is called "regeneration."

The "declaration" of the American bishops, "signed in council" during the general convention of 1871—to the effect that "the word 'regenerate' in the Office for the Ministration of Baptism of Infants, is not there so used as to determine that a moral change in the subject of baptism is wrought in the sacrament"—was evidently designed to encourage a generous toleration of differences of opinion in regard to the meaning of the word referred to. I shall not, therefore, enter into any controversy as to the precise nature of the internal spiritual change which is commonly supposed to be implied in that much-discussed, much-abused, and much-misunderstood term; nor shall I consider the propriety of expunging it from the offices, or of inserting some alternate phrase which,

when desired, can be used in its place. With regard to all these questions every Churchman has a right to his own opinions; none of which is it the object of this chapter to controvert. But I would fain do something, however little, toward so far divesting this subject of the confusion of thought which largely envelopes it, that those who have been baptized may clearly apprehend the relation into which they have thereby been brought to Christ and the Church; and that those who promised for others in baptism may better understand their duty as sponsors, in the religious training of their godchildren. It may aid to dissipate this confusion of thought in reference to regeneration, or the change produced in baptism, if we first settle distinctly in our own minds what is not embraced in it.

Let it then be remembered that faith and repentance constitute no part of this change. These must precede baptism, either intelligently exercised by the subject, or pledged in his behalf by those whom the Church authorizes to answer for him. Baptism is

the seal of these religious affections; but it has no more to do in producing them, than the wax applied to a deed has to do in causing the stipulations contained in it.

Nor does regeneration embrace that change of heart and life which is properly called conversion or renovation. This last mentioned change may precede or follow baptism, and may be repeated many times in the course of a man's life. Nay, it must be repeated as often as a man falls into sin, or he can never regain the favor of God, forfeited by transgression. David was doubtless regenerate (perhaps in the same sense in which the Prayer Book uses that term) at the time of his circumcision; for it was then that his relation to God's spiritual kingdom was changed. And no one can doubt that in the main, he led "the rest of his life according to that beginning." For, on coming to maturity, he received that highest encomium ever bestowed upon a mortal, viz: that he was "a man after God's own heart." Yet long after this, having become penitent for a grievous sin, he utters that imploring petition contained

in Psalms, LI: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." There can hardly be a more palpable theological error, therefore, than the one so prevalent among many Christian people now-a-days, viz: that of confounding regeneration and conversion. It would not be surprising if it should be found, upon thorough examination, that a great part, if not the whole, of the confusion of ideas to which I have alluded, has grown out of this one germinal error.

But, once more, let it be remembered that regeneration does not embrace sanctification. The former is the entrance upon the Christian course; the latter is the state of holiness to which it leads. But the soul may desert the way of life before that final consummation is reached. Regeneration is the "seed sown;" sanctification is the "full grown corn in the ear." But the drouth, the storm, the predatory bird may prevent the ripening of the precious grain. Regeneration is instantaneous, and has no necessary connection with the exercise of the subject's will: Sanctification is a

gradual change produced by a constant and earnest striving "to enter in at the strait gate." Regeneration may result from another's act; but sanctification is produced, if at all, by the conscious exercise of the subject's own individual powers, in conjunction with the promised influences of the Holy Spirit. We see, therefore, that to confound regeneration and sanctification would be as serious an error as that which makes no distinction between regeneration and conversion.

What, then, is the change produced in baptism? Let the words of the Catechism first reply. When the child is asked, "Who gave you this name?" he is taught to answer: "My sponsors in baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven." And when he is asked, "What is the inward and spiritual grace" of baptism?—he is instructed to reply: "A death unto sin and a new birth [or regeneration] unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the

children of grace." Then let us listen to the words of the baptismal office, omitting (for the sake of the argument *a fortiori*) the word regenerate, which is several times repeated. Immediately after the words of administration the minister says: "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock;" and, directly afterward, he declares that the child is "grafted into the body of Christ's Church." And then, in the final prayer, he returns thanks in these words: "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to receive this infant for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy holy Church."

Strong as this language is, it is by no means stronger than that of Holy Writ, from which, in substance, it is borrowed. "As many of you," says St. Paul to the Galatians, (III: 27,) "as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." And the same Apostle says, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (XII: 13): "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." To

put on Christ, that we may be clothed in His righteousness—to be incorporated by baptism into one body, which is none other than the body of Christ—surely there can be no more forcible representation than this, of the change which takes place in baptism, from a state of nature to a state of grace; and yet all this is implied in that common synonym of baptism—christening: *i. e.*, being made a Christian, or a member of Christ. It seems to me that the presence or absence of the word regenerate can but slightly modify the force of such language as this.

I cannot forbear, in this relation, to call the attention of the reader to the language of the "Articles of Religion," which have sometimes been thought to present a lower view of baptism than that contained in the Catechism and the Offices. Article XXV, "Of the Sacraments" in general, declares that the "Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's good-will towards us,

by the which He doth work invisibly in us and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." And in Article XXVII, we are taught as follows: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new-birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God."

These extracts must be sufficient to convince any one who is willing to be convinced, that all the parts of the Prayer Book are consistent not only with each other, but also with that fountain head from which they all emanate—the word of God.

But finally, in relation to the effects of baptism, I would say it represents to us a present salvation from sin. It hardly needs an argument to prove that one who has

"put on Christ," one who is "a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven," one who has received "remission of sins," and been received into covenant relations with his Creator—it hardly needs an argument, I say, to prove that such a one is fully assured of present salvation. If, therefore, there were found in Revelation no other utterances upon this subject than those to which I have already alluded, we should be abundantly justified in saying that every one who rightly receives the sacrament of baptism is, in that very act, saved from all the fatal effects of transgression. How strong therefore is our assurance made by the words of St. Peter in his First General Epistle (III : 21,)—where, after having alluded to the ark in which Noah and his family "were saved by water," (*i. e.* by the power of the water to bear the vessel upon its surface) he says: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus

Christ." If to any it seem inconsistent that salvation should here be ascribed to baptism, when elsewhere it is attributed to several other causes, I reply, that when there are several co-ordinate and essential means to any result, each one of them may properly be said to produce it, since without the co-operation of each it could not be produced at all. Therefore, when St. Paul says, (Ephesians II : 8,) "By grace are ye saved through faith," he does not by any means contradict the statement of St. Peter, that we are saved by baptism; since faith and baptism are both made, by the grace of God, co-ordinate and essential means in the salvation of men.

But let us never forget that it is only a present salvation of which baptism assures us. As the water of the deluge would not have saved Noah if he had deserted the ark, so baptism will not save us if we desert the "ark of Christ's Church," in which that sacrament has placed us. Nay, as the water would have proved the destruction of Noah, if he had abandoned the ark, so if we abandon the Church, or, in other

words, give up the profession which we made in baptism, that blessed sacrament, thus abused, will but enhance our condemnation in another world. But if, trusting not alone to the temporary cleansing of baptism (the first "putting away of the filth of the flesh") we strive to make it the occasion of keeping always "a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men;" then will that baptism into the death of Christ, conjoined with the other spiritual qualifications, make us also partakers of His resurrection, and secure for us thereby a final entrance into His everlasting kingdom. Baptism places us in a state of present salvation; but even the baptized are exhorted by St. Paul (Philippians II: 13,) to work out their future and eternal salvation "with fear and trembling." And this they will do, if they join to their own earnest striving an implicit confidence in the blessed assurance given by the same holy Apostle: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

CHAPTER V.

THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

We shall have little difficulty in deciding the question: Who are proper subjects of baptism? if we keep in mind (what has already been shown) that it is the means—and, since Christ came, the only revealed means—by which any human being can enter into formal covenant with God. Under the Mosaic dispensation, males only received the visible sign of the covenant—the whole nation, females as well as males, being thereby designated as God's chosen people. Doubtless this usage grew out of the original headship given to the man; and if it had pleased God that the same rule should continue in force under the Christian dispensation, no true servant of His could have questioned its propriety. But since, after the coming of Christ, the

covenant was to be no longer limited to a single nation or race, it seemed good to the Head of the Church that all, both male and female, should be received into its pale, not only upon the same terms as to internal qualifications, but also by the reception of the same external rite. We accordingly find it expressly declared, with reference to those who were first received into the Church (evidently to mark the distinction between the terms of the old covenant and the new) that "they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts VIII: 12.) There is, therefore, no difference of opinion among Christians about the propriety of regarding women, equally with men, as proper subjects of baptism.

But it is nearly, if not quite, as obvious that all ages should be considered legitimate subjects of baptism, as that both sexes should be so considered. Under the old dispensation, adults who had not been admitted into the covenant in infancy, were received by circumcision. But a vast majority of those who then constituted the visible Church, were received into it when but eight days

old. And since neither the natûre of God nor of man was changed with the change of dispensation, it was, *a priori*, in the highest degree improbable that infants would be excluded from the new covenant. But that God should have designed to exclude them, without giving any distinct and positive command for their exclusion, is utterly incredible. Instead, however, of finding any such command, we find abundant proof (by necessary inference) of His intention that infants should still be regarded as proper subjects of His covenant.

For when He intended so far to extend the terms of formal admission as to include females as well as males, He caused the fact to be expressly recorded. Is it then conceivable that He would have failed to put on record His intention to exclude the entire class of human beings that had hitherto furnished nearly all the formal subjects of his covenant? And when He established it as one of the principles of His new spiritual kingdom, that entire households (Acts xvi : 15 and 33,) should be received into it by baptism, on the profession of the

householder's faith, is it not certain that if infants were to be excepted from this arrangement, He would have caused that fact also to be recorded—especially as the disciples themselves, and all their first converts, had never known or dreamed of any other arrangement? Surely, among all the "silences of Scripture," there is none that speaks so eloquently for any doctrine, as does this for the truth (which ought to be unspeakably precious to the heart of every pious parent) that it is still a part of the divine plan for saving lost men, that infants, as well as adults, shall be taken into covenant relations with their Maker, and receive the formal pledge of His pardoning mercy. And why should any Christian ever have doubted that this is still, as of old, one of the fundamental principles of God's spiritual kingdom? Cannot infants, as well as adults, enter into covenant with their fellow men? And if God ever designed to make a covenant with His creatures at all, is it not reasonable to suppose that the analogy of human compacts, in this regard, would be maintained? To the oft-repeated objec-

tion that infants cannot believe, and therefore cannot perform the essential conditions of the covenant, I reply, that this objection would exclude them from Heaven, as well as from the Church. For Christ says, "He that believeth not shall be damned." And if it be asserted that infants are not included in this declaration because they do not disbelieve, then I reply that, for the same reason, they are not disqualified from becoming participants in the divine covenant, and members of Christ's kingdom on earth.

If we consider properly the character of infants and the nature of baptism, we shall clearly perceive that the ordinance is as necessary for them as for adults. For although it is true that, as yet, they have committed no voluntary transgressions, still, inheriting as they do a sinful nature, and being under the curse of the law, they have as urgent a need of "the remission of sins," as any other human beings.

In certain governments, crimes against the sovereign are punished by attainder, or corruption of blood and forfeiture of civil

rights, for many generations. In every such case, if the sovereign offers conditional pardon to the attainted, it is necessary that all should comply with its conditions, whether they were guilty of the actual transgression, or are only the descendants of those who were.

Analogous to this is the attainder of sin. God, the offended Sovereign, has seen fit to make the reception of baptism the seal of that sacred covenant, outside of which no human being can receive the assurance of pardon. All the analogies of human experience conspire with the whole tenor of divine revelation to teach us that infants, as well as adults, may be received into that covenant, by the reception of its appointed seal. Nothing, therefore, but ignorance, or prejudice, or false religious instruction, can account for the singular phenomenon of a Christian parent so far overcoming the instincts of natural affection, as to neglect or refuse to imitate the pious example of Lydia and the converted jailor, by securing for his children, as well as himself, the pledge of God's covenanted mercies.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

In speaking of the subjects of baptism, I have necessarily presented one very important view of the Scripture argument for the baptism of infants—namely, the argument based upon the necessity of that sacrament for all, whether infants or adults, and upon the anology existing between it and circumcision, as the seal of the covenant. But as the opponents of infant baptism lay great stress upon the interpretation of individual texts, I will now cite a few passages, each of which, as I think, proves conclusively that the baptism of infants is in accordance with the divine intention.

The first that I shall adduce is from Solomon (Proverbs XXII: 6,): "Train up (or as the marginal reading has it, 'cate-

chise') a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." I am aware that all those who do not believe in infant baptism (and perhaps some of those who profess to believe in it) are accustomed to regard these words as simply inculcating the general duty of instructing children religiously, so that, when they are old enough, they will of their own accord become Christians. But this interpretation by no means satisfies the necessary force of the language. These words were uttered by one who had himself been made a participant in the divine covenant (and thus brought into "the way he should go,") when but eight days old. And as, under the old dispensation, the injunction of Solomon could be obeyed only by adhering to the circumcision of infants; so, under the new, it can be obeyed only by maintaining the baptism of infants. The foundation of all efficient religious training of the young must now be laid at the font. If the Bible were every where else entirely silent in regard to this matter, I should want no better warrant than this

inspired utterance of Solomon, for our practice of initiating young children into the Church of Christ. Mark, I pray you, the natural and inevitable force of the words: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." How, I ask, can a child be trained up "in the way he should go," if he is not first brought into that way? And how can we hope, or desire that our children should "not depart from" the way they have gone, during all their adolescent years, if we believe that way leads down to perdition!

If the doctrine that infants cannot become subjects of Christ's kingdom on earth, were any part of "the doctrine of God our Saviour," no inspired writer could have uttered the words we are now considering. Rather would the wise man have said: Train up a child, as well as you can, in the way he should not go, and when he is old he may, by the grace of God, depart from it! If to any it seem absurd and impious to attribute such a thought to a sacred writer, I call them to witness that the ab-

surdity and impiety are not ours; for we believe that both reason and revelation emphatically enjoin the duty of placing our children, even in infancy, "in the way they should go," and of so bringing them up in that way, that "when they are old they will not depart from it." But if, from any cause—whether from the imperfection of training, or from the weakness of nature, or from the force of temptation—they do sometimes depart from it, melancholy as such an apostasy is, we cannot regard it as a reason why they, any more than adults, who are exposed to the same fearful liability, should be prohibited from entering the Church—the sacred, the only "way" which God has appointed to conduct lost souls to Heaven.

My second citation is from the words of Christ: (St. Mark, x: 14.) "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." That the infants brought to Christ, at the time when He uttered these gracious words, were then and there baptized, I do not claim; but that the words

themselves necessarily imply a susceptibility of divine grace, on the part of little children, which renders them proper subjects of baptism, I unhesitatingly affirm.

That the injunction of the Saviour was intended to be binding upon the Church, in all ages, I presume few, if any, will deny. But now that He is no longer bodily present upon earth, how else is it possible for that injunction to be obeyed, but by making infants members of Christ in holy baptism? They cannot, like adults, come to Him by their own voluntary exercise of faith and repentance; but, being incapable of disbelieving, and having no sins of their own to repent of, they still come to Christ, when their parents, mindful of His gracious permission and authoritative command, bring them to the font, there to "put on Christ" by being baptized in His name. And by no other means, except as the angel of death bears them away to Christ in Paradise (and the Christian who denies that infants can come to their Savior here, has seldom the cruel consistency to to deny that they may go to Him there!)—

can they approach Him—even in a figure. For to teach them that it will be their duty to come to Christ, when they are old enough to do so of their own volition, is not to suffer them to come to Him in infancy; but rather is it coldly to tell them that they have not yet been brought to Him, and cannot be while their infantile state continues. Let those who will, thus taunt their offspring with being aliens from the covenant of grace. We, at least, "have not so learned Christ."

My third citation is from the address of St. Peter to the multitude, on the first Whitsunday: (Acts II : 39,) "The promise is unto you and to your children." Obviously there can be no promise to those who are incapable of receiving the benefits pledged therein. If, therefore, the promises of God have no other relation to infants than simply as an assurance that they may become participants in the divine covenant, when they arrive at mature years, then are those promises not to infants at all, as such, but only to adults. And for little children, during their infancy, there is no hope of

salvation but in the "uncovenanted mercies of God." I leave to those who reject infant baptism, the hopeless task of reconciling this position with the explicit declaration of St. Peter.

My fourth citation is from the writings of St. Paul: (I Cor. VII : 14.) "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the [believing] wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the [believing] husband. Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." The most reasonable and natural interpretation of these words is this: That if both the parents are unholy (that is, not saints) the children also are in that state of unholiness or uncleanness, in which they have no hereditary right to the blessings of the divine covenant. But if even one of the parents is a believer, the other is so far sanctified by the conjugal union, that the children are entitled by birth to be admitted as participants of that covenant, by the reception of its divinely appointed seal. What the children of unbelievers can receive only through Christian adoption, the offspring of the saints may claim

as a birthright. Any system of interpretation which would render this passage consistent with the theory that no infants are proper subjects of baptism, would make of Holy Scripture an unintelligible jargon, capable of being tortured into the support of any heresy, however monstrous.

The fifth passage which I shall cite is the Saviour's commission to the Apostles, as recorded by St. Matthew (XXVIII: 19-20.) "Go ye therefore and teach [or as the word in the original implies, make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Pray, what idea could the Apostles, who were Jews, have of "discipling all nations," but that of taking the children, as their nation had always done, initiating them into the Church by the customary rite, and then teaching them to believe and to do as the law of God requires? As Bishop Tomline well observes: "Nations consist of persons of all ages, and therefore infants as well as adults must be included in this

command, as the objects of baptism. * * Had our Saviour intended any alteration in Jewish practice, or any limitation with respect to age, He would not have failed to specify it."

This great commission itself, therefore, may properly be regarded as a direct command for baptizing infants, and then training them up in accordance with their baptismal vows.

My sixth and last citation is from the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus; where, along with several others, is enumerated this singular requisite for ordination to the sacred ministry, viz, that of "having faithful children." It would of course be in the highest degree absurd to suppose that St. Paul intended to forbid Titus to ordain to the ministry any man who was childless, or to require him to debar from the ministry any one having children, until they had come to mature years, and by a voluntary profession of their faith and life of obedience, had shown themselves "faithful" disciples. What then are we to understand by this remarkable requirement? Obviously this:

That if any candidate for ordination had children he must have had them baptized into the faith of Christ, and placed in a course of training "to continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto their life's end." From the very fact of such a requirement being made, we are naturally left to infer that, then as now, some professing Christians were careless and negligent about bringing their children to Holy Baptism; and that, to rebuke such unchristian carelessness and negligence, St. Paul saw fit to command that none who were thus forgetful of the highest duty of a Christian parent should be admitted to any rank of the sacred ministry. Let those who are guilty of the same offence now-a-days, take to themselves the apostolic rebuke!*

There are many other separate passages, from which the practice of infant baptism might be justified, perhaps as fully as by

*I desire in this place to acknowledge and record the fact that my attention was directed to this last remarkable and most instructive passage by the Bishop of Kansas, one of the Right Reverend fathers who were so kind as to read the manuscript of the present volume, and to give it their cordial endorsement and recommendation.

the ones already cited. But surely these are enough—especially as it has previously been shown that the practice in question is sustained by the general tenor of divine revelation.

I trust that the brief presentation which I have made of the teaching of Holy Scripture, in regard to this subject, has satisfied all my readers that the XXVIIth of our Articles of Religion embodies a precious truth, when it says: "The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable to the institution of Christ."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

The history of infant baptism, as a practice of the Church from the first century to the close of the fourth century, was written nearly two hundred years ago by William Wall, a learned presbyter of the Church of England, in a large octavo

volume. This fact of itself seems like a forcible proof that the practice in question is of primitive origin; for, otherwise, how could the materials for so voluminous a history have accumulated in four centuries?—especially as nobody pretends that any controversies occurred among the ecclesiastical writers of those ages concerning the propriety of the custom.

Mr. Wall was, of course, "answered;" for if his opponents, the anti-pedobaptists, had found no champion, the fact would have been taken by the whole religious world as an acknowledgment of defeat. But the "answer," written by Mr. John Gale, probably the most able writer of his party then living, is now published by the Church, along with Mr. Wall's rejoinder, in another large octavo volume; and these two volumes constitute that treasure-house of ecclesiastical learning known as "The History of Infant Baptism, by William Wall, M. A."

When two political opponents have had a joint discussion, and one party has shown "the courage of its opinions," by publishing the entire debate as "a campaign doc-

ument," the fact leaves little doubt on which side lies the weight of the argument.

But though (as I have observed) the materials for the early history of infant baptism are so abundant, yet the argument drawn therefrom in proof of its primitive character, and hence of its divine authority, may be condensed into a very few pages.

We have seen that the testimony of the inspired writers, convincing as it is, in favor of infant baptism, consists rather in a necessary inference from their writings, than in any positive commands enjoining it, or direct statements of its actual existence. We ought not, therefore, to be surprised to find that the testimony of the writers immediately succeeding the Apostles, is largely of a similar character. If the writers of the first century assert principles which clearly imply the necessity of baptism for infants as well as adults—if the writers of the following ages speak of the custom of baptizing infants as universal and apostolic —if these characteristics of the custom are denied by none—and if all the controversies in which allusion is made to it refer only to

such incidental circumstances as make the very controversies themselves a proof of its primitive character, and universal observance—surely no modern Christian could ask or desire any stronger evidence of the fact that, in admitting infants to baptism, he is following the authority of the ancient Church and of Christ its founder.

And this is precisely the state of the case, as substantiated by ecclesiastical history. Clemens Romanus and Hermas Pastor, who lived in the first century and were contemporary with the Apostles, both speak of original sin, and of baptism the appointed means for its remission in such a manner as clearly to make that ordinance just as necessary for infants as for adults. Wall, in his "History," and (shortly after him) Bingham, in his "Antiquities of the Christian Church," cite at length the passages from these authors in which this view is plainly set forth. It would be interesting to quote them, but want of space forbids.

Justin Martyr, who wrote his "Apologies" about the year 148, not only takes the same theological position, but directly asserts

that the baptism of infants had been practiced from the times of the Apostles. For he says that "there were, among Christians in his time, many persons of both sexes, some sixty and some seventy years old, who had been made disciples to Christ from their infancy, and continued virgins, or uncorrupted, all their lives." That to be "made disciples to Christ" signifies or includes baptism, it would be absurd to deny. The persons, therefore, to whom he alludes, must have been baptized in apostolic times; since sixty or seventy years previous to the date of his writing must carry us back to a time when some of the Apostles were still living.

After Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, ("a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John") writing about the middle of the second century, and Tertullian, a presbyter of Carthage, at its close; Origen, who lived at the commencement, and St. Cyprian in the middle, of the third century—all speak in the most unequivocal manner of infant baptism as the common practice of the Church in their times, and

as transmitted to them from the times of the Apostles. The second of these writers, indeed, (Tertullian) from some peculiar notions of his in regard to the unpardonable nature of sin committed after baptism, was not only in favor of postponing that of infants until mature years, (except when there was imminent danger of death—when he urges their baptism) but he also held that the baptism of adults who were exposed to unusual temptations, should be deferred until they were advanced in years. But his views in these respects were confessedly a novelty, and he found for them neither advocates nor followers.

In the time of St. Cyprian a controversy sprang up (based upon the acknowledged substitution of baptism for circumcision, as the seal of the covenant), in reference to the age at which infants should be baptized—some maintaining (among whom was "one Fidus, a country Bishop") that as circumcision was not administered until the eighth day, so baptism should follow the same rule. This question was referred by Fidus to the council of Carthage (A. D. 253)

composed of sixty-six bishops presided over by St. Cyprian, who returned a long synodical answer, from which (after Wall) I make the following extracts:

"As to the case of infants, whereas you judge that they ought not to be baptized within two or three days after they are born; and that the rule of circumcision should be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified [*i. e.* made saints] before the eighth day, we were all, in our assembly, of the contrary opinion." "All of us judged that the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to no person that is born"—*nulli homini nato;* literally to no man born—*i. e.* as soon as he is born. "The Scripture gives us to understand the equality of the divine gift on all, whether infants or grown persons." "Unless you will think that the grace itself which is given to baptized persons is greater or less according to the age of those that receive it; whereas the Holy Spirit is given not by different measures, but with fatherly affection and kindness equal to all." "So that we judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining the

grace, by the law that is now appointed; and that the spiritual circumcision ought not to be restrained by the circumcision that was according to the flesh: but that all are to be admitted to the grace of Christ."

Concerning this controversy and its decision Mr. Wall pertinently remarks: "It is not to be denied by any but that this is a plain proof of infant baptism being taken for granted at that time, since both Fidus, who puts the question, and the council that resolve it, do show by their words their sense to be that they are to be baptized in infancy; only Fidus thought not before the eighth day."

I will adduce but one additional argument in proof of the primitive practice of infant baptism in the Church, and that is derived from the so-called "Pelagian Controversy," which sprang up about A. D., 400. Mr. Wall thus sets forth the nature and origin of this controversy, and its bearing upon the question before us:

"A new heresy, happening in the Church at this time, gave more occasion to speak of infant baptism than ever had been be-

fore. Not that any of the parties disapproved it; but one of them held that there is no original sin in infants, and that brought in much discourse about their baptism." That is to say, the opponents of the heresy maintained that the baptism of infants, which all acknowledged to be primitive and apostolic, was a proof of original sin, since all baptism is "for the remission of sins." The enforcing of this argument on the one side, and the efforts to parry it, on the other, gave rise to the "much discourse" of which Mr. Wall speaks. The same author proceeds:

"Pelagius, a monk living at Rome, was the author of this heresy, at least the first promoter of it in the West. And one Cælestius, another monk, was his chief abettor; and afterward Julianus, a bishop, and Anianus, a deacon. It was not started till the year of Christ, 410. But most of the managers on each side were men of note before the year 400.

"The men that I named were the only writers of the Pelagian side: but a considerable number of the people was brought

over to incline to their opinions. They argued that the doctrine of original sin and natural corruption, by which persons are supposed to be born under a necessity of sinning, did cast a reflection on the honor and justice of God who gives us our being; and this argument was plausible among the vulgar.

"Consequently to this, they said that baptism of infants was not for any sin they had, but to gain them admittance into the Kingdom of Heaven. For they said that children, though they were not baptized, should have an eternal and happy life; not in the Kingdom of Heaven indeed, because our Saviour (John III : 5) had determined the contrary; but somewhere, they knew not where."

It will be seen that the opinion was well-nigh universal in the ancient Church, that no one dying unbaptized, whether adult or infant, could be saved in Heaven. This opinion naturally grew out of the interpretation which was given to the words of our Saviour in the passage above referred to. "Except a man be born of water and of the

Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." If "the Kingdom of God" necessarily means a state of salvation in Heaven, then all that die unbaptized must be lost. But the best Biblical scholars of our Church give to that phrase, in the text quoted above, a different meaning. Dr. Lightfoot makes it synonymous with "the Gospel state;" and Bishop Mant interprets it to mean "the Church, or 'Kingdom of God' on earth." Into this "state of salvation" baptism is the appointed door of entrance; and only those who enter through that door can be taken into covenant relations with God, and receive the pledge of His pardoning mercy. We may charitably hope that those who die without baptism, but in that moral and spiritual state which entitles them to its reception, will be saved in Heaven at last; and in the first rubric of her burial service our Church clearly sanctions that hope in regard to infants; but surely no prudent and pious man can be willing to leave himself or his offspring with no reliance for salvation except upon the "uncovenanted mercies of God."

The object for which the above standing quotations from the ancient fathers are made, is something entirely aside from their doctrinal import; but it seemed to me nevertheless desirable that some of their strong expressions in regard to the nature and necessity of baptismal grace should be viewed in the light of modern opinion.

After giving an exhaustive account of the Pelagian controversy, with copious extracts from the writers on both sides, Mr. Wall sums up the argument to be derived from it in favor of the early practice of infant baptism, in the following paragraphs, with which I will close the present chapter:

"The most material thing to our purpose to be observed from these passages of the latter part of this history, is this: How exceedingly the Pelagians were pressed with this argument taken from the baptism of infants; and to how many absurdities they were driven in answering of it. Sometimes they said they were not baptized for forgiveness, but for something else. Sometimes they owned they were baptized for forgiveness, not that they had any sin, but

that the uniformity of the words might be kept; or because they were baptized into the Church, where forgiveness was to be had for those that wanted it; or because they were baptized with a sacrament which had the means of forgiveness for any that had sinned or should sin. And some flew to that, that infants have sinned, though not by propagation from a sinful stock; but either before they were born, in a former state, or since they were born, by peevishness, etc. Since these men resolved not to own original sin in infants, how much it had been for their turn to deny that they were to be baptized at all! If they had known any Church or society of Christians, then in being, or that ever had been, that had disowned infant baptism, their interest would have led them to allege their example, or to plead it in their own behalf. But far from that, Cælestius does own that infants are to be baptized according to the 'rule of the universal Church;' and Pelagius moreover confesses that 'he never had heard, no not even any impious heretic or sectary, that denied infants' baptism;' and

that 'he thought there could not be any one so ignorant as to imagine that infants could enter the Kingdom of Heaven without it.'

"And if there had been any such Church of anti-pedobaptists in the world, these two men could not have missed an opportunity of hearing of them, being so great travelers as they were; for they were born and bred, the one here in Britain, the other in Ireland. They lived the prime of their age at Rome, a place to which all the people of the world had then a resort. They were both for some time at Carthage in Africa. Then the one settled at Jerusalem, and the other traveled through all the noted Greek and eastern Churches in Europe and Asia. It is impossible there should have been any Church that had any singular practice in this matter, but they must have heard of them. So that one may fairly conclude, that there was not at this time, nor in the memory of the men of this time, any Christian society that denied baptism to infants."

CHAPTER VIII.

SPONSORSHIP THE NECESSARY ACCOMPANIMENT OF INFANT BAPTISM.

An infant is, of course, incapable of performing for himself, and in his own name, any responsible act. His powers, both mental and physical, are yet undeveloped; for which very reason he is called an infant —*i. e.* one who cannot speak—the act of speaking being perhaps the simplest that is performed by mind and body conjointly. But though an infant cannot speak or act for himself, yet, as he has rights, so also he may be said to have responsibilities. It is his duty to grow up a faithful and obedient member of the family and the state into which he is born. He may be left in the possession of immense wealth by parents who are now in their graves. And as he is protected by the state in the ownership of this property, it is his duty to use it in

such a manner that the state shall receive therefrom no detriment. But how can he do this, since he has no ability to act for himself? Simply by having guardians appointed by the civil authority, who are empowered to act for him until he shall have arrived at the age of accountability. Through their agency he can enter into covenant with others, for the use or managment of his estate, which shall be just as binding upon both parties thereto, as if he were already a man.

And this is precisely the way in which an "infant enters into covenant relations with God." As he cannot enter into covenant with man, without some one to assume the important trust of guardianship; so he cannot enter into covenant with God, unless some one can be found who will assume the still more important trust of sponsorship. And as in civil matters he is bound by the acts of his guardians, appointed by the authority of the state, so, in religious matters he is bound by the solemn act of his sponsors, appointed by the authority of the Church.

How perfectly intelligible to the lowest comprehension does this simple analogy render the following questions and answers, taken from the catechism:

"*Question.* What is required of persons to be baptized?"

"*Answer.* Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God, made to them in that sacrament."

"*Question.* Why then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?"

"*Answer.* Because they promise them both by their sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform."

As an infant cannot enter into covenant with God, except through the agency of sponsors, so no one who brings an infant to baptism can divest himself of the solemn obligations of sponsorship—even though no word may have been uttered by him, during the performance of the sacred rite. And, strange as it may seem, this is essentially the view taken by those Christians

who, retaining in their churches the baptism of infants, yet reject all formal sponsorship, and seem at least to deny (by their common belief in the necessity of subsequent regeneration) that the ordinance can have any sacramental effect whatever upon the subjects themselves. For they all teach, so far as I am aware, that those who present an infant for baptism, in that very act place themselves under a solemn obligation to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Our Church shows herself to be apostolic, as well by retaining formal sponsorship in infant baptism, as by adhering to the ancient belief that children are made in that ordinance "members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven."

That the view thus briefly presented is that of the early Church, is susceptible of the clearest proof. Bingham, in his Christian antiquities, asserts that "they who were sureties or sponsors for children, were obliged first to answer in their names to all the interrogatories that were usually put in baptism; and then to be guardians of their

Christian education." And he quotes at length, from the writings of such ancient authors as Tertullian, Gennadius, and St. Augustine, passages which prove conclusively both these positions. According to the last named writer, "when an infant is said to have faith, the meaning is only that he receives the sacrament of faith, which faith he is bound to embrace when he comes to understand it. In the meantime he is called a believer, because he receives that sacrament and is entered into the covenant of God by his sponsors, who supply that part for him which he cannot perform in his own person." This is precisely the view now taken by our Church, and fully set forth in the catechism, and in the baptismal office.

In speaking of the fact of sponsorship I have, as was unavoidable, alluded to its reasonableness. This, however, I purpose more fully to illustrate in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REASONABLENESS OF SPONSORSHIP.

Our practice of receiving infants as members of the Church, and of holding them responsible, on arriving at maturity, for the fulfillment of promises made for them by others, without their knowledge or consent, is pronounced by some to be in the highest degree absurd. But in cases every way analogous (as I hinted in the last chapter) these very objectors do unhesitatingly sanction—are in fact compelled to sanction—a principle and practice precisely similar.

There are among men three divinely appointed institutions, the Family, the Church, and the State; each enjoining upon its members peculiar duties, and each the source of incalculable blessings which are transmitted from parents to children in an endless succession of generations. In each, infants

are born to the inheritance of certain rights and privileges, and held responsible for them on arriving at maturity.

What would be thought of a child who, on becoming old enough to understand the relation existing between himself and his parents, should address them in language like this: "I care not for your protection and I repudiate your authority. My birth in your family is an accident over which I had no control, and for which I am not responsible; and I refuse to obey requirements to which my consent has never been given, nor even asked!" The wickedness of such a rebellion would be equaled only by its monstrous absurdity: And yet neither its wickedness nor its absurdity would be greater than that of the man who should scorn the blessings and reject the authority of the Church, because his birth and baptism therein were accidents over which he had no control.

But let us look more particularly at the analogy between the Church and the State.

The State is a body of people, united under one government, transmitting its constitu-

tion and laws from one generation to another, in an unlimited succession. Each individual born of its members, is, from the moment of his birth, under its protection; and on arriving at a proper age is admitted to its privileges, and held amenable to its laws.

Suppose now that a man, having committed a crime and been brought before the civil authorities to answer therefor, should address them in words like these: "I am not a member of your commonwealth. I had no voice in making your laws, and I will not be bound by them. I have never exercised any of your franchises. I ask not for your protection. I scorn your privileges, and I reject your authority." He would, perhaps, be sent to the lunatic asylum instead of the prison; but even as a lunatic he would not be allowed to trample upon the laws of his country.

Suppose, again, that the State should borrow money, and pass a law providing for its payment at the end of forty years; and that, at the expiration of that time, a

tax having been levied, an individual should refuse to pay it because, forsooth, when the law was made he was not old enough to vote! If he had property, it would be taken for the tax, in spite of his insane remonstrance; and if he should resist the collection by force, he would justly be treated as any other malefactor.

But suppose that a whole State, by its representatives, should say: "This money was borrowed by a former generation of men, while we were infants or yet unborn. We deny that it has benefited us, and we refuse the payment." They would perhaps have the power thus to disgrace themselves; but the scorn of the civilized world would be the penalty which they would suffer for thus discarding the fundamental idea of civil government—the idea, namely, that one generation has the power and the right to impose an obligation upon its successor.

We, the adult citizens of this Republic, stand sponsors for the generation that is springing up around us. Regarding them as infant citizens, we have become their

sureties to the State (not the less really for the absence of ceremony) and have, in effect, promised and vowed three things in their name. First, that they shall renounce the evil spirit of insubordination, and all his works, the pomps and vanities of despotic governments, and all the sinful lusts of unlawful aggrandizement. Secondly, that they shall believe all the articles of our Republican faith. And thirdly, that they shall obey the constitution and laws of their country, and walk in the same all the days of their life. We are morally bound to furnish them with that kind of mental and moral training which is best calculated to make them honest, peaceable, and law-abiding men. If, on arriving at maturity, they refuse to believe and to do as we have virtually promised for them, we, having performed our duty, shall remain guiltless, and they henceforth will be responsible for their own acts.

And this is the fitting analogy to the relation in which our children stand to the Church of Christ. By the ordinance of baptism they have been received "into the

congregation of Christ's flock." Regarding them as infant Christians, we have become their sureties to the Church, and have made to her three similar promises and vows in their behalf. We have placed ourselves under the most solemn obligations to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and we believe that, if we perform our duty faithfully, they will grow up conscientious and devoted Christians. The promise is to us and them, equally. We have the same reason to hope for their final salvation, that we have to hope for our own. We may (it is a fearful truth)—we may fall into sin, and finally perish, and so may they. But if, having brought them into the fold of Christ, we there continue to do our whole duty by them, in the fear of God, we can leave them resignedly in His hands, well assured that, if they fail of Heaven at last, we shall be guiltless in the day of judgment.

And now what need have I further to apply and enforce the argument. I trust that my readers see its force, and that they have made the application for themselves.

And they cannot, I think, fail to acknowledge that those who discard sponsorial baptism as absurd, should, in order to be consistent, discard parental and civil authority, as equally and similarly absurd.

CHAPTER X.

CONFIRMATION THE LEGITIMATE END OF THE SPONSOR'S OBLIGATION.

All obligations assumed in behalf of others have their appropriate limits, not only as to the things to be performed, but also as to the time of performing them. The obligation of an agent appointed to transact a specified business, terminates when the work is done and the account rendered. The obligation of the guardian ceases when the ward has attained his majority. These two cases conjointly illustrate the nature and the limit of the obligation assumed in sponsorship. The duties of the sponsor (which will be considered in another chapter) are set down with considerable minuteness in the Baptismal Office. Of course no honest Christian, who has voluntarily bound himself to perform those

duties, will consider his obligation at an end until, to the best of his ability, he has performed them.

The same office points to the confirmation of the child, as the proper limit of the time during which those duties are to be fulfilled. If, on arriving at the proper age for the reception of that ordinance, (which is commonly set down by the bishops of the Church at about fourteen years,) the child should refuse to receive it, notwithstanding the faithful endeavors of his sponsors to bring him to a better mind, doubtless he, and not they, would be responsible before God for his neglect. At the same time, no conscientious sponsor would ever be able or willing to divest himself of a certain feeling of responsibility even for such godchildren, until they had voluntarily taken upon themselves the solemn obligation of the covenant, in the appointed ordinance of the Church.

Confirmation is the complement of baptism. In the case of infants, it bears the same relation to the other ordinance, that the voluntary assumption of a debt by a

ward, in his own name, would bear to the original creation of the debt through his guardians. Baptism is the seal of the covenant; confirmation is the acknowledgment of the seal. In the case of adults it is the same—except that they took the obligation upon themselves at the first; with them, therefore, it is a re-affirmation of the baptismal covenant under new, if not more solemn, sanctions.

But in neither case is it simply a re-affirmation. All the ordinances of the Church are "means of grace;" and that confirmation is to be regarded as one of the chief among these, is obvious from the fact that the Church makes its reception (or a fitness and desire to receive it), an express condition of formal admission to the holy communion.

The history of confirmation can easily be traced through all the ages of the Christian Church. Indeed, its prototype (so far as it relates to those baptized in infancy) may be found among the customs of the Jews. For (as Wheatley informs us from Grotius) "it was a custom of the Jews to bring their

children, at the age of thirteen years, to be publicly examined before the congregation, and to make a solemn promise that they would from thenceforward engage themselves faithfully to observe the law of Moses, and so be accountable for their own sins. After which engagement followed the prayers of the congregation that God would bless and enable them to make good their promise." The same author supposes that the taking of Christ to the temple at twelve years old, was in accordance with this custom; and that the understanding displayed by his questions and answers, while sitting among the doctors, proved the propriety of his being made a "child of the precept" in advance of the customary age.

But confirmation (called in the New Testament "the laying on of hands") was first administered in the Church to those who were baptized in adult years, and as soon as might be after their baptism. And its reception at the hands of the Apostles was accompanied by the special affusion of the Holy Spirit, whose descent upon the whole Church Christ had promised as a conse-

quence of His own ascension into Heaven. In this view of the ordinance, confirmation has for its prototype the event which occurred at our Saviour's baptism; of which St. Matthew (III : 16,) thus speaks: "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him."

As, therefore, Christ Himself, upon being initiated into His public office by baptism, was anointed by the affusion of the Holy Ghost to be our prophet, priest, and king; so all who have been made members of Christ in that holy sacrament, must receive the same anointing before they can enter fully upon their public ministry, as "kings and priests unto God."

While the age of miracles lasted, confirmation was often (though probably not always) accompanied by those supernatural endowments which have always been regarded as the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; such as prophesying, healing, and speaking with tongues. Since that

time only the ordinary gifts of the Spirit are to be expected, either in this or any other Christian ordinance—of which gifts the physical senses can take no cognizance. But who that feels the need of divine consolation, guidance, and sanctification, would willingly neglect any means which the Scripture has appointed for imparting or confirming these heavenly graces?

St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews (VI: 2,) enumerates confirmation, or "the laying on of hands," as among "the principles of the doctrine of Christ." And to reject this ordinance because it is no longer accompanied by supernatural manifestations, would (as Wheatley very well observes,) be quite as unreasonable as it would be to reject prayer and preaching for the same reason—since they also, in the first ages of the Church, were frequently attended by similar manifestations. And besides all this, confirmation, as one of the peculiar functions of the highest order of the ministry (handed down as such from the earliest times,) constitutes an essential link in the chain of history which connects

the Church of to-day with that of the Apostles.

Let us be thankful that, in our branch of the Church Catholic, this sacred rite has been preserved in its purity and simplicity, both as an appointed means for the edification of youthful and inexperienced Christians, and as a proof to the world that ours is indeed an "Apostolic Church."

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROPRIETY OF REQUIRING THAT EVERY BAPTIZED CHILD SHALL HAVE AT LEAST ONE SPONSOR OTHER THAN ITS NATURAL PARENTS.

While serving for several months as army chaplain, during the late war, my attention was often attracted to the fact that every gun-carriage and caisson was provided with a convenient place upon which was borne a supernumerary wheel. The object of this arrangement, which I understood to be universal in the artillery service, is obviously to guard against the loss of the vehicle and its contents, by one of its wheels becoming disabled. If one of them should be broken in transportation, or carried away by a shot, there would be another left to supply its place.

In accordance with the same prudent foresight, whenever a fortified place is to be

attacked, or any other movement of offensive warfare to be made, there is a body of reserves always kept in readiness for any emergency.

And this foresight of the military authorities in providing as far as possible against the casualties of war, is an apt illustration of the wisdom of the Church militant in providing that amid "the changes and chances of this mortal life," the young soldiers of Christ entrusted to her keeping shall never want the support, guidance, and protection necessary to their spiritual safety.

In the early Christian ages, when the children of heathen parents often came under the care of the Church, and when there were comparatively few to take upon themselves the office of sponsors, any Christian might present an infant for baptism and answer in its name. Even a deaconess, or other female Christian, might become sponsor for a male child. And even now (since the Church never requires impossibilities), in case of necessity, the same liberty would be allowed.

The Church of England, adapting her rules to a time when nearly all were professing Christians, requires that there shall be, for every baptized child, three sponsors whose spiritual oversight shall be superadded to that of its natural parents. Our own Church, suiting her legislation to circumstances differing from both the cases alluded to, requires (like the English Church) that there shall be three sponsors; but the parents, if themselves baptized, may stand for their own offspring.

In all these cases it is the obvious intention of the Church to furnish ample provision for the training of her infant members, whatever casualties may happen to their natural guides and protectors. If one "wheel be broken," there shall be another to carry its precious burden. If one regiment be stricken down in the fight, there shall be a "corps de reserve" to supply its place—to carry on the contest begun, and help to secure the final victory.

But the value of the sponsorial office is by no means limited to those cases in which baptized children have unbelieving parents,

or lose their parents in infancy. If the parents survive the adolescence of their children, and are diligent and faithful during all those years in training them for Christ—even then the sympathy and counsel of pious sponsors are invaluable. The parents who have been most assiduous in the Christian education of their own children, and the children that have profited most by the fidelity of their own parents, will acknowledge the most readily the benefit to be derived from the faithful discharge of sponsorial duty. We cannot surround our children with too many holy influences. We cannot provide them with too many safeguards against the allurements of the world, the flesh, and the devil. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." And the greater the multitude of sympathizing Christian friends provided for our children, the surer they will be to "lead the rest of their life according to the beginning" which they made at the font.

Aside from the religious benefit that may be derived from sponsorship, the social enjoyment and the intellectual improvement

which may be, and often have been, secured to families brought together by this tender relation, are by no means to be overlooked. Delightful friendships, cemented by this relation, may shed a halo of brightness over the lifetime of those who might otherwise have lived and died as strangers. The pleasant intellectual excitement elicited by the epistolary correspondence to which it gives rise, may awake to vigor and usefulness faculties that would otherwise have remained dormant. And who that properly appreciates even these temporal advantages, would not adhere all the more religiously to that admirable feature of our Church, which is thus seen to be, like "godliness" itself, "profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come?"

I had not supposed that any member of our own Church would for a moment consent to the abandonment or change of any existing feature of her sponsorial system. But it is not long since I saw, in one of our diocesan Church papers, an article advocating the disuse of sponsors, other than par-

ents, for the reason that the duties of sponsorship are so generally neglected! In reference to this singular argument I will say only this, that if every thing good were to be abandoned because very many, who profess to adhere to it, neglect or abuse it, even the Church itself would soon become a forgotten institution, and the world would be given up to the unchecked and unquestioned sway of the evil one.

Let us rather use our system faithfully, and thus demonstrate, to those who neglect or abuse it, the blessed advantages which the Church and the world are losing through their unfaithfulness.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DUTIES OF SPONSORSHIP, AND WHAT THE CHURCH HAS SUFFERED BY THEIR NEGLECT.

The outlines of sponsorial duty (as I have already hinted, and as every one, at all familiar with the Prayer Book, is well aware) are fully set forth in the Baptismal Office. In the closing "Exhortation to the Godfathers and Godmothers," the minister employs these impressive words: "Forasmuch as this child hath promised by you his sureties, to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve Him; ye must remember that it is your parts and duties to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons: And

chiefly ye shall provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health; and that this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a Godly and a Christian life."

And at the end of the Exhortation occurs this closing injunction: "Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church catechism set forth for that purpose."

From these directions we learn that the sponsor's duties to his godchildren are embraced under two general heads, viz: First, to teach them what the Christian religion is, both theoretically and practically; and, second, to persuade them to take upon themselves, when properly qualified, the religious promises which were made for them by others. And these duties devolve upon all the sponsors alike. If the parents stand, it may be their duty, as parents, to

do more than the others, since they have better opportunities; but it is no more their duty, as sponsors, than it is of the others. Each is bound, in honor and religion, faithfully to do all he can toward securing for the baptized child the priceless advantages which baptism is designed to convey. It is a duty which no man can properly delegate to another; any more than the duty of private or of public worship, or of communicating with his Christian brethren in the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

That these duties are to a sad and even shameful extent neglected, is a fact of which no Churchman is ignorant. Professing Christians—communicants of the Church—in numberless instances take upon themselves the solemn obligation of sponsorship (which binds them to the performance of these duties,) as a mere matter of form. They keep no record either of the names or number of their godchildren. They make no effort to trace their removals from place to place, and so very soon lose sight of them altogether. A few children of

personal friends who remain in their neighborhood, or with whom they maintain a frequent correspondence, may be occasionally reminded of the relationship which exists, and of the duty which the Church has imposed upon both parties to that relationship. But even in such cases, how seldom is the tie which binds them regarded by either party with any adequate degree of religious reverence or affectionate interest. Especially when (as is usually the case) the parents also stand as sponsors, the others, taking it for granted, perhaps, that the religous training of the children is sufficiently assured, think no more of the matter; while the parents, trusting to the fidelity of Sunday-school teachers or pastors, or indulging, it may be, in a similar thoughtlessness, neglect the solemn duty which not only the Church, but even nature herself, has made obligatory upon them.

The results of this sad neglect are such as might reasonably have been anticipated. Many of the baptized children of the Church never come to confirmation at all;

but continue mere nominal Christians to the end of their days. Still more, perhaps, receive that holy ordinance with inadequate instruction and preparation, and consequently with an imperfect appreciation of the solemn duties which it imposes. Thus, out of the whole number of those who, in infancy, receive "the mystical washing away of sin" at the font, the ones who, by consistently leading "the rest of their life according to this beginning," give practical glory to God for that sacred cleansing, may not greatly exceed the ratio of the one in ten, who alone turned back to glorify God for the miraculous cure of his leprosy. And were Christ now to make his personal appearance on earth, the sad state of things existing in His Church might call forth from Him the same melancholy question which, on that occasion, He addressed to His disciples: "Were there not ten cleansed? —but where are the nine?"

But aside from its disastrous effects upon individual piety, this too common neglect inflicts, in many ways, a fearful detriment upon the Church at large. It gives a

plausible pretext to the charge, so often made by those without, that the religion of the Episcopal Church is one of form alone. It gives practical force to the arguments of those who, in one way or another, have allied themselves with the greatest heresy of modern Christendom—viz: that infants are not proper subjects of Christ's kingdom on earth. For although, even if it were universally true, as is often alleged, that baptized children are no more likely to be consistent Christians in mature years, than those that remain unbaptized till then, the fact would have no logical force against a positive ordinance of Christ—such as infant baptism has been shown to be—yet men, in this practical age, will judge of systems, as of individuals, "by their fruits." And if we fail to furnish them with convincing, practical proof that baptized children are better off than others, we need not wonder if they pay very little heed even to the most logical arguments drawn from reason, revelation and ecclesiastical history.*

It is because we have failed, in so lament-

* Note B.—Page — 149

able a degree, to furnish the world with this convincing proof of the practical value of the leading feature of our Church's system, that her reputation stands at so low an ebb to-day, in many parts of our country. And it is owing to the same disastrous failure that the growth of her piety, thus poisoned at the root, is everywhere so sadly dwarfed and hindered; that her prosperity is retarded; that worldliness bears sway in so many of her congregations; that her charities and missions are so often overshadowed by those of other religious bodies; and that her final occupation of the entire field in which Providence has cast her lot, is doubted if not despaired of, by many of her most faithful defenders.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RESULTS WHICH WOULD FOLLOW THE UNIVERSAL PERFORMANCE OF SPONSORIAL DUTY.

Let my readers imagine to themselves an agricultural district which was once rich and prosperous, and with every conceivable advantage of soil and climate, but among whose landed proprietors universal thriftlessness and neglect have for years prevailed. The general features of such a region it is easy to describe. The houses, barns, and fences everywhere present an appearance of dilapidation and decay. Many of the fields are abandoned entirely to the growth of noxious vegetation, and the others, but half cultivated and poorly protected from the wandering, unfed cattle, are even more dreary and unsightly than the former. Implements of husbandry, of ingenious pattern, it may be, and of great original cost, lie rotting and unused in the

fields and by the road-sides. The mills and shops which, in more prosperous times, were vocal with the sounds of industry, are most of them silent, and many of them in ruins. Every home is as sombre within as it is without; and every garden and door-yard is but an epitome of the general desolation which broods over the entire landscape.

What has produced these disastrous results? Simply the habitual neglect of culture in its season. What would restore to such a district all its former beauty and prosperity? A return to the universal practice of industry in the cultivation of the soil. And in these respects such an agricultural region is the natural analogue of the Church. Neglect of Christian culture in that season when the growth of spiritual graces in the soul can be most successfully fostered, is the cause (as we have seen) of the principal discouragements under which the Church at present labors. And as a careful and judicious husbandry will soon give a face of blooming beauty to a landscape made dreary by neglect; so the uni-

versal and complete performance of sponsorial duty, in the Christian nurture of the young, would soon cause the "waste places" of our Zion to "rejoice and blossom as the rose."

We have the unfailing promise of God, that if we train up our children in the way they should go, they will not depart from it when they are old. The way they should go is found only in the Church of Christ. To train them up in that way is so to instruct them in the performance of Christian duties and in the exercise of Christian affections—so to screen them from temptations and surround them with holy influences—that, during all the years of their tutelage, they will remain faithful to their calling as young soldiers of Christ. It must be possible so to train them, since God could not mock us with a promise based upon impossible conditions. Hence all baptized children, if sponsorial duty were fully performed, would continue to the end of their days consistent and faithful members of the Church—devoting themselves with all their powers, both moral and ma-

terial, to the service of their divine Master.

O, what a power in the world—"terrible as an army with banners"—would the militant Church then become! Going forth from conquest to conquest, with no further need to expend her divine energies in the subjugation of internal foes, and no longer hindered by the dead weight of apathetic friends, she would find her complete triumph over the combined hosts of earth and hell, an easy and speedy achievement. The powers of darkness would vanish before the advancing legions of light, and the glory of the millennial day would dawn upon the long-expectant world.

If any consider this picture Utopian, and insist that the perfect obedience which alone could realize it, cannot be looked for or hoped for, while the evil "infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated"—I reply, that if a man does not endeavor in good faith to keep the promises which he has made to God, I do not see how he can claim to be a true Christian at all. Granted that neither the perfect obedience of one, nor the imperfect obedi-

ence of all, can realize this picture, yet every approach toward perfect obedience, in all, or in one, will be an approach toward its realization. And every Christian who honestly prays "Thy kingdom come," will strive to secure an answer to his prayer by those works of obedience which alone can render it effectual. None, perhaps, can be perfect, but all may and should be honest; and simple honesty in the keeping of sponsorial promises would, in a few years, if universally observed, effect a change in the condition of the Church, of which the picture that I have attempted to draw would prove to be hardly an exaggeration.

As he who violates one of the commandments "is guilty of all," (because he becomes subject to the spirit of disobedience which would lead him to violate all, in case of temptation) so he who performs one religious duty faithfully, gives the best possible pledge that he will be faithful to the whole circle of Christian obligations. He, therefore, who is true to his duty as a sponsor, may be relied upon for equal fidelity in all the other relations of the Christian

life. With such a man, religion will be the chief concern, the one interest that absorbs all others. His worldly occupations, and even his amusements, will be regarded as means for promoting the glory of God. His private and domestic devotions will never be remitted; and his place in the public sanctuary will never be vacant, except upon the demand of some more imperative obligation. His sympathy will never be withheld from the sorrowing, nor his words of counsel and warning from the erring, who come within the sphere of his influence. Acknowledging God as the giver and rightful proprietor of his worldly possessions, he will consecrate them all to Him; and will apportion his gains among the various objects of public and private charity, according to a conscientious estimate of his ability, and the relative claims of each.

A parish Church, made up of members like this, would of course be characterized by a rapid growth, by abounding prosperity, spiritual and temporal, and by a rapidly increasing influence for good

throughout the entire community. And if the Church at large were composed wholly of such members, the moral revolutions which would speedily be wrought through her instrumentality, would be such as the most vivid imagination could scarcely exaggerate. It is true that not all members of the Church are sponsors; but so large a proportion of them are, that no abatement from this estimate need be made on that account.

Such results, therefore, direct and indirect, might reasonably be anticipated from the universal performance of sponsorial duty. The Christian who acts from principle instead of fashion, will do all in his power to secure these results even though the most that can be done by any individual, may be but as a drop compared with the ocean.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS TO SPONSORS.

No religious duty will be faithfully and efficiently performed unless the grounds upon which it rests be intelligently understood, and its performance be made a matter of conscience. The first practical suggestion to sponsors, therefore, is to make the relation they have assumed the subject both of study and of prayer. Let them resolve at the outset that they will be thoroughly honest before God, in this all-important matter—that they will not take upon themselves this solemn relation for the sake of form alone, nor discharge its duties in the careless, ineffectual manner which we have seen to be so common, and so disgraceful. As it is insincerity which vitiates the practical working of our sponsorial system, so this attitude of honesty,

resolutely taken and consistently maintained, would of itself restore to that system its original virtue, and render the Church once more the invincible power which the world felt and acknowledged in the first and purest ages of her history.

But no Christians have a right to indulge that morbid conscientiousness, which would prompt them to refuse to become sponsors from the apprehension, that they may not prove true to their obligations. If a sponsor has already a large number of godchildren, and is called upon to add one more to the list, it may be proper for him to suggest another person for the office; but if no other suitable one can be found, he has no right, for any such cause, to decline the duty. The Baptismal Office properly calls the assumption of this relation a "charitable work;" and as a man would justly be called something worse than uncharitable, who should allow a foundling to perish at his door, upon the plea that he already had as many children as he could provide for; so the Christian would at least be sadly wanting in Christian charity, who, for a similar

reason, should refuse to adopt another infant member of Christ, into his family of godchildren.

The relationship once assumed, the conscientious sponsor will adopt and carry out a regular system for the performance of its duties. This will require that a record be kept of at least the names of his godchildren, and of their removals from place to place, in order that he may not lose sight of them, and so be prevented even from showing a friendly interest in their religious welfare. The latter part of the present volume consists of a register, designed to facilitate the keeping of such a record. The very act of keeping it will serve to awaken and perpetuate in the mind of the sponsor an interest in his godchildren, and suggest methods by which he can serve them. Let this register be religiously kept—every entry being made as soon as possible after the occurrence of the event or fact to be recorded. This of course will require a little time and attention; but if religion is to be made the business of life (as it must be, if we would make it more than a

mockery), it ought surely to be attended to in a business-like manner. And how can a Christian, who does not think so small a transaction as the sale of a yard of calico, unworthy of a place in his day-book and ledger, consider it irksome or burdensome to keep such a record of the principal facts in the religious life of his godchildren, as will assist him in performing faithfully and profitably the obligations which he has assumed in their behalf?

As soon as the child "shall be able to learn," it is the duty of each of his sponsors "to see that he be taught." If his parents are remiss, they too should be reminded of their duty: And there should be constantly kept up between the parents and the other sponsors a friendly understanding, that they may aid each other in securing for the child the greatest possible amount of religious benefit. If the sponsor and his godchildren remain in the same neighborhood, the former should lose no opportunity of cultivating with the latter an affectionate intimacy. He should see them as often as possible, and manifest a lively

interest in their welfare, physical, moral and intellectual, as well as spiritual. He should examine them as often as possible in the Church catechism, and such other manuals of religious instruction as may be placed in their hands. He should (if possible) mark every anniversary of their baptism, as well as every Christmas-day, by the bestowal of some friendly remembrancer—giving the preference to such religious books as are suited to their capacity. He should often remind them that they are members of the Church—Christians already, by a solemn act whose authority they can never shake off—that they should regard the baptismal covenant not only as solemnly binding upon their consciences, but as honorable and profitable beyond all computation—that they ought to keep its complement, confirmation, steadily in view, and that he (the sponsor) could not divest himself of a painful sense of responsibility for their remissness, should they postpone that sacred ordinance beyond the proper time for its reception, by failing to be prepared for it. Few indeed would be the cases in which

the manifestation of such a pious interest as this, in the welfare of godchildren, would not result in the development of early piety, and the formation of a vigorous Christian character.

If the sponsor and his godchildren are separated by their removal or his own, he should still manifest toward them, by every means in his power, an affectionate Christian sympathy. After they become old enough to appreciate such attentions, once a year will not be too often to send them some token of rememberance by mail, accompanied by a few words of Christian counsel. They should also be encouraged to reciprocate these friendly attentions by occasional letters, asking advice whenever they desire it, and giving a frank and familiar account of the results which may have followed thus far their endeavors to live the Christian life.

If the parents or guardians are themselves consistent members of the Church, and conscientiously doing all in their power toward the religous education of their children, the sponsor, while rejoicing in such

powerful auxiliaries to his own pious endeavors, will not on that account abate one iota of his effort to acquire and maintain a direct personal influence for good over the minds of his godchildren. But if, on the contrary, those upon whom nature has placed the chief responsibility of infant culture, are ignorant or regardless of that sacred obligation, the sponsor (as just now hinted) should add to all that he may be able to do for the children, an earnest endeavor to arouse the parents also to a sense of their solemn duty. If they remain careless and indifferent, he may not be able, with the limited opportunities at his command, to train up his godchildren fully "in the way they should go;" and consequently he may not have the confident assurance which the Scripture would otherwise warrant, that they "will not depart from it when they are old." If, however, he is faithful to his trust, he may still cherish the reasonable hope that his fidelity, blest by God's providence and the Holy Spirit, may be the means of their steadfast continuance in the Christian course. But whatever may be its

effect upon others, that fidelity cannot fail to secure for his own soul the blessed rewards of obedience, both in this world and in that which is to come.

Although my remarks, throughout this manual, have the appearance of being designed especially for godfathers, yet it must be sufficiently obvious to all that they are equally appropriate for godmothers. The latter, indeed, since they usually have more leisure, will perhaps find less inconvenience than the former, in carrying out the proposed system. I have only one suggestion for them especially, and that is not to neglect their godsons, under the impression that it is the peculiar duty of the godfathers to watch over them. Sponsors are bound to be faithful to all their godchildren alike; but many boys and young men will be found accessible to the religious influences exerted by pious and affectionate godmothers, when no other would be likely to reach them. Sponsors should carefully study the individual dispositions of their godchildren, of both sexes; and exercise a just discrimination in regard to

the times, places, occasions, and methods of seeking to produce upon their minds permanent religious impressions. In no other human undertaking is the wisdom of the serpent, as well as the harmlessness of the dove, more important than in the performance of the sponsorial duty.

Prayers for the Use of Sponsors.

I.

A General Prayer to be used by Sponsors for Themselves and their Godchildren.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, through the authority of Thy Church, hast appointed the office of sponsorship for the spiritual care and nurture of the lambs of Thy flock, grant, I beseech Thee, to all those who have been entrusted with this sacred office, the abundance of Thy grace, that they may perform the duties which it devolves upon them, in Thy fear and to Thy glory. And especially to me, Thy unworthy servant, give wisdom and strength from on high, to guide and assist me in the responsible task which I have undertaken in Thy name. In laboring both for the temporal and spiritual welfare of my godchildren, make me patient, earnest, and sympathetic, that I may win their love, and secure that influence over their minds which shall predispose them to receive the intended benefit. Make me apt in teaching, and exemplary in conduct; and give them ductile hearts and teachable minds, that they may follow those lessons and examples which are adapted to make them wiser and better. Preserve them in bodily health, and guard them from temptation. Grant them continually Thy Holy Spirit that they may early take upon themselves the vows which their sponsors made for them in baptism, and live thenceforward in the faithful

performance of the same. Give them such success in their worldly callings as shall be most conducive to their spiritual good. Make them zealous, devoted, and conscientious, as Christians, and active, influential and useful as citizens, and may all of us, sponsors and godchildren together, so acceptably serve Thee in this life that, in the world to come, we may have life everlasting.

Grant this, O Blessed Saviour, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost ever livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

II.

For a Godchild who has Become Wayward, and Irreligious.

O Blessed Spirit, through whose gracious influences alone the human soul can be regenerated, sanctified and saved forever, descend, I pray Thee, as a quickening and awakening Power upon the conscience of the wayward youth for whom, in the sacrament of baptism, I stood as sponsor; but who, through the seductive wiles of the devil, and the frowardness of *his* own evil nature, has abandoned the grace pledged in that holy ordinance, and repudiated *his* spiritual birthright. Open the eyes of *his* understanding that *he* may see the error of *his* ways; and arouse *his* moral sense, that *he* may appreciate the terrors of the violated law.

When the thunders of Sinai have duly alarmed *his* fears, let the melting tones of the Crucified on Calvary restore to *him* the comfort of love and the assurance of hope. May the promised reward stimulate *him* to obedience, and the threatened penalty keep *him* back from further transgression. Create in *him* a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit

within *him*. Give *him* unfeigned repentance for all that is past, and assist *him* in the making and keeping of virtuous resolutions for the future. And so guide, guard, and govern *him* henceforth that *he* may continue to walk in the ways of truth and peace, and finally be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.

Grant this, O Blessed Spirit, to whom with the Father and the Son, the Triune God, be ascribed all power, glory, and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

III.

FOR A GODCHILD WHO IS SICK.

[From the Prayer Book.]

Almighty God, and merciful Father, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death, look down from Heaven, we humbly beseech Thee, with the eyes of mercy, upon the sick *child* for whom our prayers are desired. Deliver *him*, O Lord, in Thy good appointed time, from *his* bodily pain, and visit *him* with Thy salvation; that if it should be Thy good pleasure to prolong *his* days here on earth, *he* may live to Thee, and be an instrument of Thy glory, by serving Thee faithfully, and doing good in *his* generation. Or else receive *him* into those heavenly habitations, where the souls of those who sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity.

Grant this, O Lord, for the love of Thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

IV.

FOR A GODCHILD UNDER AFFLICTION.

[From the Prayer Book.]

O merciful God, and Heavenly Father, who hast taught us

in Thy Holy Word that Thou dost not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men, look with pity, we beseech Thee, upon the sorrows of Thy *servant* for whom our prayers are desired. In Thy wisdom Thou hast seen fit to visit *him* with trouble, and to bring distress upon *him*. Remember *him*, O Lord, in mercy; sanctify Thy fatherly correction to *him*; endue *his* soul with patience under *his* affliction, and with resignation to Thy blessed will; comfort *him* with a sense of Thy goodness; lift up Thy countenance upon *him*, and give *him* peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THANKSGIVINGS.

I.

For a Godchild's Recovery from Sickness.

[From the Prayer Book—with changes and additions.]

O God, who art the Giver of life, of health, and of safety, I bless Thy name that Thou hast been pleased to deliver from *his* bodily sickness, my dear godchild, on whose behalf I desire now to return thanks unto Thee. Gracious art Thou, O Lord, and full of compassion to the children of men. May *his* parents and sponsors be duly impressed with a sense of Thy merciful goodness; and may they have grace so to bring *him* up in Thy fear and love, that *he* may devote the residue of *his* days to an humble, holy, and obedient walking before Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

After the Confirmation of a Godchild.

I give Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee through countless dangers to preserve the life of my beloved godchild, and through as countless temptations to keep *him* from falling permanently under the power of the Evil One. I thank Thee for even the little that I may have accomplished in furthering this blessed result; and for Thy abounding grace, which has prevented the much that I have left undone from countervailing the good influences by which Thou hast surrounded *him*.

I bless Thee especially that, with a mind stored with Christian knowledge, and a heart imbued with Christian graces, *he* has been led to take upon *himself* the vows which *his* sponsors made for *him* at the baptismal font. And I humbly beseech Thee that, through all *his* future life on earth, *he* may still be surrounded by the same blessed influences that have guarded *him* hitherto; and that when his life-long struggle with earthly temptation is over, *he* may be admitted to the rest and felicity of Thy Heavenly Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOTES.

A.

CHAPTER II, page 33. I am aware that when the old covenant is contrasted with the new, it is common to understand by the former, the "Covenant of Works," proclaimed from Sinai, and by the latter, the "Covenant of Grace," revealed in Christ Jesus. But this is a metaphorical use of the word covenant, whereby it is made to imply a system of religious principles and rites, under which God dispenses his blessings to men. In this sense there have been three "Covenants," or "Dispensations"—the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. But in the sense of a compact between God and individual men, there have been but two covenants, or more strictly, one under two forms. The first (which was first definitely proposed to Abraham) was a pledge of the believer's faith in a Saviour to come; the second, in a Saviour already having come and offered Himself for the sins of the world.

It may be that the prophets, in speaking of the "New Covenant," refer primarily to the Christian dispensation. But this idea is by no means inconsistent with the view above set forth.

B.

CHAPTER XII, page 124. If any one should say that, according to this showing, infant baptism is wholly inoperative

without Christian training; I reply, that so is planting without watering—and that the farmer who should refuse to plant because he thinks he can raise just as good a crop by watering only, would act quite as reasonably as he who should refuse to have his child baptized because baptism without nurture produces no fruit.

Should any rejoin that these cases are not parallel, since men do become Christians without being baptized in infancy, I reply again, that men do not, strictly speaking, become Christians, (or "members of Christ") at all, without baptism; and that to defer this ordinance until mature years for the sake of giving a Christian education first, would be just as absurd as to defer planting until midsummer, in order to prepare for the seed which requires the entire season to assure a plentiful harvest.

REGISTER.

Number.

Name and Age of Child.

When and by whom Baptized.

Parents.

Sponsors.

When and by whom Confirmed.

Residence and Removals.

Remarks.

Number.

Name and Age of Child.

When and by whom Baptized.

Parents.

Sponsors.

When and by whom Confirmed.

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